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deavor to have the botanical portions as complete, exact and reliable as possible. At present they are neither exact nor reliable, though the latest editions are markedly better than former ones.

THE CUTTING UP of published exsiccatae and distribution of the specimens in the general herbarium is advocated by Professor Bessey in the *American Naturalist* for December, and the method has much to commend it. This brings all the specimens of a group together and makes their examination simple and easy. The saving of time and patience may be well illustrated by an attempt to find a particular specimen in the unindexed and voluminous collections of von Thümen for example, which, unless much time is taken, may lead to no other result than doubt whether it occurs there or not. Uniform treatment of this kind has been generally adopted in the large phanerogamic herbaria of the country, and it seems to us could well be extended to the cryptogamic collections—in fact that there should be, when possible, but a single series in each herbarium, ranging from the protophyte to the highest angiosperm.

THE DAY is not far distant, we believe, when phanerogamic botanists will do as zoologists, bryologists and mycologists are now doing in quoting authorities for plant names, *i. e.*, cite not only the name of him who combines the generic and specific names, but also the one who first distinguished the plant and assigned to it a specific name. The burden of synonymy is growing greater day by day.

THE GENERAL INDEX to the first ten volumes has been somewhat delayed in its preparation, but will soon be ready.

OPEN LETTERS.

Seeds wanted.

Professor Schübel, of Christiania, Norway, whose works upon the history of cultivated plants and the changes that have occurred in the distribution of indigenous vegetation are so well known, greatly desires fresh seeds of our Indian rice, *Hydropyrum esculentum*, or *Zizania aquatica*. If any of our western botanists can supply them they will much oblige him, and also the subscriber,
ASA GRAY.

The Dispensatories.

I have had occasion to consult extensively the latest editions of the National and U. S. Dispensatories, and am much surprised at the looseness there found in the use of botanical terms and the frequent inaccuracy of the botanical information (?) there given. Surely, in works of such prominence and importance the very best botanical talent ought to be employed to contribute this portion, as has apparently been done in the chemical, pharmaceutical, and therapeutic parts. Perhaps a word from the GAZETTE would be of influence upon the next editions of these books.
R.

A Phallus.

If the reply be within the scope of the GAZETTE, I should be very glad to know if there be any means of extirpating from the soil the spores of a most